

Philadelphia, Pa--Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) spoke at the African Cultural Alliance of North America's (ACANA) African cultural festival and music concert Saturday at Penn's Landing.

The festival was a part of the PECO Energy Multicultural Festival Series, and the theme of the event was "Bridging the Gap." A crowd of thousands gathered to enjoy the music and to support ACANA's after school program for students and its computer lab, two initiatives that embody ACANA's goal of promoting social, artistic, cultural, and economic development in Southwest Philadelphia.

"I commend ACANA for helping immigrants resettle and learn valuable skills that will assist them in school and the workforce," Congressman Sestak said. "Making investments in workforce training and education is an imperative to secure a brighter future for ourselves and our children."

The African Cultural Alliance of North America has been involved in the Philadelphia community for ten years, and its services are targeted towards the more than 200,000 African and Caribbean immigrants in the Philadelphia region. ACANA's after school, computer training, and adult education programs were created in response to requests for help in dealing with the challenges associated with adjusting to their new community.

Congressman Sestak works to help connect the immigrant community with educational and business opportunities through legislative efforts and constituent outreach. The Congressman has supported the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, a non-profit with branches in Philadelphia and Delaware County that works to connect immigrants with jobs and to help them open businesses. The immigrant population in the Philadelphia region is among the fastest growing in the nation, and Congressman Sestak expresses appreciation for the organization's mission to successfully integrating immigrants into the region's economy.

Congressman Sestak is also working with local business leaders to create the Business and Education -- Secure Tomorrow Together (BESTT) Program, which aims to connect middle and high school students with businesses and industries that can secure their economic future through an experienced-based curriculum as well as mentorships with local trades and professions.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group*

*of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*